Belt vs Chain Garage Door Opener — Drive Picker

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Pick by your garage, not by the price tag. Attached garage or bedroom above: belt or jackshaft. Detached garage: chain. Low ceiling or car lift: jackshaft. Cold garage: screw can slow in winter.

Drive	Noise	Unit cost	Installed cost	Best for
Chain	More audible, 70–80 dB	$150–$250	$350–$650	Detached garage, tight budget
Belt	Quiet, 40–50 dB	$160–$350	$400–$800	Attached garage, bedroom above
Screw	Mid, about 60 dB	$150–$300	$300–$650	Cold garages, few parts
Jackshaft	Quiet, about 50 dB	$280–$750	$600–$1,300+	Low ceiling, heavy door

Unit costs: This Old House, 2026. Installed costs: InspectandTest, Oct 2026 (chain, belt, jackshaft); Liberty Home Guard, 2026 (screw). Noise: Overhead Door of Wilmington, 2026; A+ Science, 2026.

Price your exact job first

The Garage Door Hub Opener Cost Calculator defaults to $530 for a fitted opener (v8 default). Chain jobs often land below it; jackshaft jobs often land above it. Size the motor by door weight first with the Opener Size Calculator — a 16×7 solid wood door weighs 379 lb by the Weight Calculator (range 360–455 lb) and 230 lb by the Opener Size Calculator; pick 1-1/4 HP to be safe.

Quick picks

• Bedroom above the garage: belt or jackshaft, never chain.
• Detached garage: chain — cheapest, strongest, easy to fix.
• Heavy door or low ceiling: jackshaft, with the motor sized by weight.
• Springs do the lifting: if the door feels heavy, drops fast, or will not stay up, call a pro. Springs and cables are pro-only work.

You might have found this by these keywords — and if not, others might have:

belt vs chain garage door opener; chain vs belt garage door opener; belt drive vs chain drive garage door opener; belt drive garage door opener; chain drive garage door opener; screw drive garage door opener; jackshaft garage door opener; wall mount garage door opener; quietest garage door opener; garage door opener noise; garage door opener cost; garage door opener installation cost; garage door opener repair cost; best garage door opener; belt drive garage door opener cost; chain drive garage door opener cost; garage door opener types; liftmaster belt drive opener; chamberlain belt drive opener; genie screw drive opener.

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